Charlotte Lennox's *Shakespear Illustrated* (1753-1754): Reading Eighteenth-Century Adaptation Practice in *Measure for Measure*

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The Enlightenment is not traditionally regarded as an age that was particularly conducive to Shakespeare. Usually, this is because of the effect that Neoclassical dramatic theory is thought to have had on the editing, adapting, and producing of his plays. The English Romantic Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his German contemporary August Wilhelm Schlegel are best known among Shakespeare scholars for their assignment of a Romantic "genius" to the Bard, yet their persistent and often explicit disparagement of their eighteenth-century predecessors is certainly no small component of their own ethos as literary critics. In one of the most famous pronouncements on the necessity of disavowing the Neoclassical legacy, Schlegel writes:

> ...I must separate myself from *them* entirely. What they say is hardly ever true, and certainly never profound...The recent editors go farther still, both in their prefaces, which are just meant as rhetorical exercises on the theme of praising the poet, and in their notes on particular passages. Not only do they concede that his plays offend against the rules, which is to examine them by wholly inappropriate criteria, but they also accuse him of bombast, of a confused, ungrammatical, conceited way of writing and of the most improper buffoonery (my italics).[1]

Here Schlegel's contempt for Neoclassicism is evident (especially given its strict adherence to the three dramatic unities). But what Schlegel and many of the other Romantics fail to see is that the Neoclassical location of a "general nature" in Shakespeare is, as G.F. Parker puts it, "...just as tenable and as unquestionably responsive to a real potentiality in the plays as those preferred by [their] greatest Romantic antagonist...."[2] As Parker's *Johnson's*

Shakespeare goes on to argue, in relation to the Neoclassicists generally and Johnson specifically, "...the [inherited] Romantic view is most usefully seen as neither a development nor a refutation [of the eighteenth century's critical stance] but a powerful alternative."[3] Thus, for all of the pedantry that the Romantics traditionally associate with both Pope and Johnson's prefaces to the plays, it is important to remember that the long eighteenth century actually did support the construction of Shakespeare as its national poet and playwright, and it did so with an unrivaled fervor in comparison to previous eras.

At the beginning of the Restoration, Shakespeare's plays had not been reprinted as a collected edition since the appearance of the second folio in 1632.[4] As the publication of his plays had dwindled, so also did their productions. By the middle of the seventeenth century, very few living actors had any experience performing the most famous Shakespearean roles since the number of regularly rotated plays *before* the Civil War had decreased to a mere five: *Hamlet, Othello, Julius Caesar, The Merry Wives of Windsor,* and *Henry IV part I*.[5] Yet between the years 1660 and 1769, a virtual latter-day Shakespearean renaissance occurred in England when twenty-four plays were reintroduced to the public and a number of festivals celebrating the Bard first transpired.[6]

In *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship* 1660-1769, Michael Dobson investigates how Shakespeare came to occupy the "centre of English literary culture."[7] In doing so, Dobson reminds us that while the Romantics certainly fostered new ideas about "authorship" and " genius," the eighteenth century actually initiated the most important traditions that we associate with Shakespeare study today.[8] Of the many to choose from, Dobson stresses the introduction of female actresses to the stage, the incorporation of Shakespeare in secondary and post-secondary curriculums, the reproduction of his work in scholarly editions, and the memorialization of the Bard in public monuments as particularly significant.[9] Ironically, though, the same age that sought to enshrine Shakespeare in the Western canon, is also the era replete with challenges to his laureateship. Perhaps, the most significant example of Shakespeare's perceived tenuity in the eighteenth century is evidenced in the persistent rewriting of his plays. Some examples of famous eighteenth-century Shakespearean adaptations include:

> ...the first conflation of two Shakespeare plays into one (*The Law Against Lovers,* created by Sir William Davenport from *Measure for Measure* and *Much Ado About Nothing* in

1662); the first *Troilus and Cressida* in which Cressida commits suicide to prove her innocence (John Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found Too Late,* first acted in 1679); the first *Henry V* in which the protagonist is pursued to France by his scorned ex-mistress Harriet, disguised as a page (Aaron Hill's *King Henry the Fifth, or, The Conquest of France by the English,* 1732); the first *As You Like It* to betroth Celia to Jaques and include *Pyramus and Thisbe* (Charles Johnson's *Love in a Forest,* performed in the same year); and the first *Cymbeline* to observe the unities of time and place (prepared by William Hawkins in 1759).[10]

Given the prevalence of such productions during the Enlightenment, it is important to consider what factors may have contributed to all of these rewritings. In this essay, I argue that one part of the answer to that query lies in the appearance of Charlotte Lennox's *Shakespear Illustrated,* a little-known three volume compilation of Shakespeare's source tales. In what follows, I examine Charlotte Lennox's *Shakespear Illustrated: Or the Novels and Histories on which the Plays of Shakespear are Founded, Collected and Translated from the Original Authors: With Critical Remarks: In two volumes* (1753-1754) in order not only to understand how one eighteenth-century female reader, writer, and critic read Shakespeare, but also to see how Lennox's scholarly project (the only study of its kind in the eighteenth century) encouraged eighteenth-century adaptations of the plays through its own model of revisionist scholarship. By reading Lennox's interpretation of *Measure for Measure* as a case in point, I chart the development of a new critical tradition in the eighteenth century: one that was for the first time centered solely on Shakespeare and explicitly concerned with the nature of literary adaptation—whether on the stage or the page.

During the eighteenth century, the English writer Charlotte Lennox became famous for her novel *The Female Quixote* (1752). And although *The Female Quixote* still remains popular among both students and scholars of the eighteenth century (due in no small part to the fact that Dr. Johnson is believed to have wrote the chapter entitled "Being in the Author's Opinion, the best Chapter in this History"), it is noteworthy that her literary criticism never fared as well. Indeed, *Shakespear Illustrated* was largely ignored by the literary establishment in the eighteenth century—first, by *The Gentleman's Magazine* (which only mentioned it in passing) and, later, by *The Monthly Review* which curtly dismissed it by saying: "Her remarks, which are very judicious, and truly critical are chiefly intended to prove that Shakespear has generally spoiled every story on which the above plays are founded, by torturing them into low

contrivances, absurd intrigue, and improbably incidents."[11] In either case, whether the result of virtual neglect or blatant condescension, Charlotte Lennox's nonfiction never garnered the same acclaim that her fiction did, which is strange because in many ways the two are intimately connected. After all, *The Female Quixote* is an adaptation while *Shakespear Illustrated* reflects on adaptation practice.

Shakespear Illustrated is a text all about the idiosyncrasies of adaptation. However, Lennox is less concerned with the growing trend of rewriting the Bard than she is with depicting the Bard's adaptations of others; thus, *Shakespear Illustrated* is the first study of its kind in the eighteenth century to detail the source tales of Shakespeare's plays and then to read these wellsprings alongside the plays that they inspired. In essence, Lennox is the first literary critic to note that the eighteenth century's adaptation practices stem, in part, from the very plays that it was so often criticized for altering. So while Lennox certainly cannot be credited with beginning the adaptation movement in the eighteenth century, her scholarship can be read in light of its support for this practice since it provided any director, scholar, or playwright with the standard derivations that Shakespeare's plays took.

The first two volumes of *Shakespear Illustrated*, published in 1753, contain discussions of *Measure for Measure, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, Cymbeline, All's Well that End's Well, Twelfth Night, Macbeth, A Winter's Tale, The Comedy of Errors,* and *Hamlet*; the third volume, published in 1754, addresses *Troilus and Cressida, Richard the Second, 1 Henry IV, (I,II, and III) Henry VI, Richard III, Henry VIII, Much Ado about Nothing,* and *King Lear.* While it is unclear how many of the original texts were actually used (rather than "cribbed") in her research, it is clear that Lennox exhausted the linguistic resources that she found in the friends and colleagues that Johnson introduced her to for help. (Under Antonio Barretti's guidance, Lennox is able to translate from Cinthio, Bandello, Boccacio, and Ariosto to name a few.)[12] As is immediately evident, Lennox does not cover all of Shakespeare's plays in her study and what appears to be a gap in her project, actually turns out to be a function of its investigative parameters: Lennox is primarily interested in the French and Italian sources so she limits herself to these tales.

From the beginning of her project, Lennox acknowledges that as a female reader, scholar, and writer herself, she is presumptuous to employ a critical voice at all in her work. It is important to remember that as a professional novelist, Lennox is allowed, even encouraged, to engage in her "female scribbling."[13] However, the commendations that she received for accounting the quixotic

misadventures of Arabella (a young devotee of French romances) do *not* extend to her participation in the male dominated academy of literary criticism—unless she is acting under the auspices of being a research assistant for her mentor Dr. Johnson (who many believe originally set Lennox on her course of scholarly investigation in preparation for his own edition).[14]

In the dedication, Lennox anticipates the criticism that she foresees her project meeting. Some of its inadequacy, she attributes (rather cheekily) to the fact of her being a woman: That no such Enemies may arise against me (though I am unwilling to believe it) I am far from being too confident, for who can fix Bounds to Bigotry and Folly? My *Sex*, my *Age*, have not given me many Opportunities of mingling in the World; there may be in it many a Species of Absurdity which I have never seen, and among them such Vanity as pleases itself, with false Praise bestowed on another, and such Superstition as worships Idols, without supporting them to be God.[15]

And although Lennox admits to her own inadequacies—"my sex, my age"—in tackling a task as enormous as she has, her voice nonetheless contains a tenor of authority as she points out the temptation of what Shaw would later term "bardolatry" in any Shakespeare study.

When it comes to her actual readings of the plays, Lennox, like her mentor Johnson, sees Shakespeare's greatest strength in his rendering of a "general nature." She writes of Shakespeare's players, "These Characters are so copiously diversified, and some of them so justly pursued, that his Works, may be considered as a Map of Life, a faithful Miniature of human Transactions, and he that has read *Shakespear* with Attention, will perhaps find little new in the crowded World."[16] Locating a universal depiction of humanity in the Bard, Lennox suggests that it is Shakespeare's use of the "mirror," rather than the "lamp," that demonstrates his talent.[17] Moreover, she points out that while Shakespeare is known for his "imagination," very few of his plots were actually "original" (because, as she explains, the notion of "originality" was defined differently during the Renaissance): "But the Truth is, that a very small Part of the Reputation of this mighty Genius depends upon the naked Plot, or Story of his Plays. He lived in an Age when the Books of Chivalry were yet popular, and when therefore the minds of his Auditors were not accustomed to balance Probabilities, or to examine nicely the Proportion between Causes and Effects."[18] For Lennox the fact that Shakespeare has incorporated source tales in his plays is important, in large part, because so much of

her own reputation as a novelist hinged on her oft-criticized invocation of Cervantes. However, Lennox also notes a troubling absence of the dramatic unities in Shakespeare when she says that he was not "accustomed to balance Probabilities, or to examine nicely the Proportion between Causes and Effects."[19] And this discrepancy is precisely what Lennox believes is at the heart of *Measure for Measure 's* problem.

Her presentation of the source tale in *Measure for Measure* is typical of how *Shakespear Illustrated* as a whole proceeds. Lennox begins her discussion of the play by recounting "The fifth Novel of the eighth Decad of the Hecatomythi of *Giraldi Cinthio.*"[20] Next, she provides a synopsis of the plot which is then followed by her own "critical remarks." In praising Shakespeare's version of the tale, she writes: "There are a greater Diversity of Characters, and more Intrigues in the Fable of the Play, than the Novel of Cinthio;…."[21] But in criticizing its overall composition, she notes, "…yet, I think that wherever *Shakespear* has invented, he is greatly below the Novelist; since the Incidents he has added are neither necessary nor probable."[22] It is difficult to tell here whether Lennox is being ironic or not. Usually, her proponents believe that Lennox's criticism is dipped in irony when she alleges that Shakespeare has inappropriately altered the tales to suit his own needs. In this case, it stands to reason that if Shakespeare's "genius" derives from his ability to elaborate on established storylines then why should she be prohibited from invoking Cervantes in her novel? On the other hand, if Lennox's adversaries are correct, then it seems that she is actually suggesting that the eighteenth-century notion of "original" authorship must be privileged above all else. In the end, though, neither of these simple premises fully supports her reasoning when she writes: "*Shakespear,* though he has altered and added a good deal, yet has not mended the Moral, for he also shews Vice not only pardoned but left in Tranquility."[23] In order to understand Lennox's criticism here, it is important to remember that whereas in the original tale the Lady (Epitia) actually does sleep with the Angelo character (Jursite) in order to save her brother (only to be betrayed by him later when he proceeds to execute her brother despite her sacrifice), in Shakespeare's version the opposite is true as a result of Marianna's bedtrick. According to Lennox, this adaptation is a mistake: "As the Character of the Duke is absurd and ridiculous, that of *Angelo* is inconsistent to the last Degree; his Baseness to *Mariana,* his wicked Attempts on the Chastity of *Isabella,* his villainous Breach of Promise, and Cruelty to *Claudio,* prove him to be a very bad Man, long practiced in Wickedness

[and deserving of revenge]...."[24] Thus Lennox's discontent over Shakespeare's use of the source tale does not stem from the fact that he has changed it; rather, it derives from her belief that he has not changed it enough.

Of course, Lennox's unhappiness about Shakespeare's rendering of Angelo is far from constituting her only criticism of the play. Lennox also has a problem with Shakespeare's interpretation of Epitia. Of Isabella, she writes:

> The Character... in the Play seems to be an improvement upon that of *Epitia* in the Novel; for *Isabella* absolutely refuses, and persists in her Refusal to give up her Honour to save her Brother's Life; whereas *Epitia,* overcome by her own Tenderness of Nature, and the affecting Prayers of the unhappy Youth, yields to what her Soul abhors, to redeem him from a shameful Death.[25]

And though Lennox is pleased by the fact that Shakespeare makes Isabella "more virtuous" than her source, she is dismayed that her language does not always reflect the true strength of her inner character—not because it is too soft, but rather because it is too harsh. In a gesture that is typical of how Lennox involves her readers, she asks them: "Is this the Language of a modest tender Maid; one who had devoted herself to a religious Life, and was remarkable for an exalted Understanding, and unaffected Piety in the earliest Bloom of Life?"[26] Desiring a character who is both rhetorically virtuous as well as actively vengeful, Lennox sees an inconsistency between Isabella's depiction and the play's conclusion. Ultimately, she believes that the title is misleading because

> ...it should have been, according to the Duke's own Judgment to have made it *Measure for Measure;* but when Angelo was pardoned, and restored to Favour, how then was it *Measure for Measure?* The case is not altered, because *Claudio* was not put to death, and *Isabella* not violated; it was not through Angelo 's Repentence, that both these Things did not happen; a Woman he was engaged to, supplied the Place of *Isabella,* and the Head of Claudio's. *Angelo* therefore was intentionally guilty of perverting Justice, debauching a Virgin, and breaking his Promise, in putting her Brother to death, whose Life she had brought by that Sacrifice....This Play therefore being absolutely defective in a due Distribution of Rewards and Punishments.[27]

Here Lennox is disturbed by what she sees as the play's "lack of morality"—a common complaint among the Neoclassicists.

However, her use of the phrase in relation to Shakespeare's characters is not solely an ethical one. For Lennox "a lack of morality" also denotes an inconsistency in Shakespeare's rendering of female characters that she finds troubling. She believes that Shakespeare's departure from the source tale's portrayal of Epitia introduces a host of technical problems to the plot when it fails to observe the dramatic unities: "The Fable thus manag'd, takes in as great a Variety of Incidents, as with Propriety can be introduced in a Play, and those Incidents naturally rising out of one another, and all dependent on the principal Subject of the Drama, forms that Unity of Action, which the Laws of Criticism require."[28] Thus Lennox, like many of her Augustan contemporaries, seems to be concerned with a dramatic ideal that Shakespeare never had in mind in the first place—a point emphatically made by Schlegel at the beginning of this essay, but one that nevertheless needs to be examined in order for her to be fully understood.

What do we make of Lennox's observation of all of these inconsistencies between the source tale, Shakespeare's play, and the dramatic unities? And, even more importantly, what do they tell us about the conception of authorship and the notion of "originality" in the eighteenth century when we read Shakespeare through Lennox's intellectual lens? These are the main questions that *Shakespear Illustrated* raises. Overall, at least in my own reading of the text, Lennox's insistence on the importance of justice in her reading of *Measure for Measure* seems in most ways to miss the point that Shakespeare is making about mercy and the problems inherent in the meting out of revenge. Even the source tale does not go far enough in distributing justice for Lennox's taste. In this sense, Lennox actually performs what she criticizes Shakespeare for doing. In an ironic gesture in a text all about the inconsistencies of source tales and their dramatic adaptations, Lennox actually offers her audience *another* rewriting of the tale of Juriste and Epitia in order to demonstrate how Shakespeare should have done it. So beyond merely criticizing Shakespeare' s adaptation, *Shakespear Illustrated* also offers an alternative adaptation—not only of Shakespeare's play, but also of its source. Rather than simply have Epitia marry the condemned Juriste and then save his life, Lennox wants her to enter a Cloister and then have her husband "stab himself in Despair" upon realizing her loss.[29] Regardless of how Lennox thinks that the *Measure for Measure* should end, the important point here is that she believes that it should end *differently* than how it has, and she feels that she has the right to alter its conclusion to conform to her aesthetic expectations. Furthermore, she is

convinced that when the dramatic unities are fulfilled all of the characters will become ethically codified in a manner that she does not see in the play's present form.

In a study all about the implications of adaptations, Lennox provides her audience with not only Shakespeare's version, but also her own. In doing so, she invites them to consider the validity of any play's conclusion. And she opens the door to supporting the practice of theatrical and literary adaptations, not by merely justifying her own version (and the versions of her contemporaries) but by illustrating how Shakespeare himself employed it in his own formulations. It is by example that Lennox uses Shakespeare to consider the validity of these practices while she also engages in them herself. Ultimately, whether the reader agrees or disagrees with Lennox's opinion does not really matter. The significance of her text rests in the fact that she has begun a scholarly conversation about the plays that is informed by a practice that very few have actually critically considered.

With the introduction of her "critical remarks," Lennox has initiated a much larger debate on the intention of adaptation and the meaning of "originality" in writing. By inserting her personal voice into the text, she argues for what she wants to see, while she also scrupulously shows what is already there through her compilation of the source tales. Simultaneously, she exemplifies what is fast becoming a common gesture by the end of the eighteenth century: an approach to Shakespeare's plays through a reflection on their themes rather than merely their conventions. So while Lennox does occasionally become distracted by a Neoclassical requirement in her discussion, this is hardly her only concern. She also writes rather eloquently on language, poetic technique, and meaning. By comparing the source tales to the originals, Lennox illustrates the evolutionary capability of any storyline while she implies the ever-changing cultural significance of these particular tales. Most important of all, though, Lennox is able to address (although somewhat inadvertently by the extended attention that she pays in critiquing them) the study of Shakespeare's characters, rather than simply his plots.

Lennox's work is interested in character, and this is where she diverges from many of her contemporaries. Is Lennox a feminist, per say, in her approach to Shakespeare? Might her insolence to speak on the Bard and then to criticize his dramatic conclusions be construed as the rumblings of an eighteenth-century proto-feminist discourse? Well, to argue one way or the other actually misses the point. Lennox is a reader of Shakespeare and she is an

obvious admirer of his work. Yet this does not prohibit her from engaging with the plays on her own terms, and it does not prevent her from becoming an active participant in a scholarly conversation that she feels compelled to enter—even if she is precluded from doing so as a woman. She looks up the plays' sources, she learns French and Italian, and she reads them according to how she thinks they should be read. The fact that Lennox engages in a type of textual revision herself does not prohibit her from assessing Shakespeare's. Moreover, her critical exercise reminds us of the eighteenth century's impetus for a new form of "originality" in writing (even on the part of its literary critics) while it also demonstrates an approach to the text that was largely taken for granted in the composition of both fiction and drama in the eighteenth century.

It is important to remember that the very gesture that initially included Lennox in the conversation about Shakespeare in the eighteenth century (the potential that she sees in his plays for adaptation), is also the same gesture that has ever since excluded her from the academy (when adaptation came to be seen as a sign of disrespect to the author). But when *Shakespear Illustrated* is read in light of the popularity of eighteenth-century theatrical and literary adaptations as well as the earnestness of eighteenth-century readers to revive Shakespeare's plays in the national repertory, it becomes clear that Lennox's intention is not to mar Shakespeare by her "critical remarks" (as many have suggested) or to embarrass herself. Instead, she wishes to attest to the multiplicity of interpretation that early modern readers experienced upon reading or seeing the plays and to investigate the nature and use of adaptation practice in her own writing and research. Thus, Lennox's view of Shakespeare, like many of the Neoclassicists, has been unfairly distorted by the acerbity of the Romantics' dismissal. Yet, this only partially clarifies her long-standing exclusion from Shakespeare Studies.

According to Ann Thompson and Sasha Roberts, the academy's preference for certain rhetorical genres [i.e. the scholarly edition, monograph, essay, and article in a learned journal] helps to explain the absence of some early modern women writers from traditional historiographies of eighteenth-century literary scholarship, yet it does not account, as I have demonstrated here, for Lennox's case because she did produce a scholarly monograph.[30] Instead, much of Lennox's omission from Shakespeare Studies might be attributed to the nature of her research. Unlike her Bluestocking contemporaries, who were all famous for promoting

the bard in the national literary consciousness, Lennox's reputation as a Shakespeare critic rested on the so called "audacious" remarks that she made about the plays. Unfortunately, these comments have largely excluded her from any serious historical consideration as either a member of the Ladies Shakespeare Club or a participant in the male dominated academy of the eighteenth century, and she deserves credit for her role in both.[31] Ultimately, Lennox's lone dissenting voice as a female critic amidst the emergent genre of eighteenth-century male criticism on Shakespeare, is innovative in the sense that, as Margaret Anne Doody puts it, "her tart remarks can be refreshing after so much elaborate praise...."[32] In the end, it is precisely the unconventionality of Lennox's tone, the "tartness" in her writing, that beckons us back to her and her Age of Reason (still in search of Shakespeare and his plays)—even after so many years.

Notes

1. Quoted in G.F. Parker, *Johnson's Shakespeare* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1989), 12.

2. Parker, 13.

3. Parker, 13.

4. Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1992), 2.

5. Dobson, 2.

6. Dobson, 2. To put it simply, according to Dobson a great deal had happened very quickly: "By 1769, when almost every national newspaper and magazine reprinted Rowe's biography as part of their coverage of David Garrick's Stratford Jubilee, readers of Shakespeare might have consulted collected editions not only of Rowe but an illustrious succession of prestigious writers including Alexander Pope, Sir Thomas Hanmer, and Samuel Johnson, and any actor in the employ of the Theatres Royal would have needed a working familiarity with at least twenty-four of Shakespeare's plays, revivals of which accounted for more than one in six of all dramatic performances given in London." (2).

7. Dobson, 3.

8. Dobson, 3.

9. Dobson, 3.

10. Dobson, 4. Ultimately, then, the same period that saw the revival of every single Shakespeare play (excluding *Love's Labour's Lost*), also saw an adaptation of every single Shakespeare play (excluding *Othello* and Henry IV, part one) (Dobson 4).

11. Quoted in Miriam Rossiter Small, *Charlotte Ramsay Lennox: An Eighteenth Century Lady of Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), 198.

12. Colin Franklin, *Shakespeare Domesticated: The Eighteenth-Century Editions* (London: Scolar Press, 1991), 225.

13. Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), xi. Spencer writes: "In the eighteenth

century we can detect the presence of a view of writing that links it to the feminine role rather than opposing the two. This, as I will show, encouraged the expansion of women's professional writing. But at the same time as encouraging women to write, this feminization of literature defined literature as a special category supposedly outside the political arena, with an influence on the world as indirect as women's was supposed to be" (xi).

14. In Boswell's *Life of Johnson,* Johnson, after dining with Fanny Burney, Elizabeth Carter, and Hannah Moore, is said to have described his young protégé thus (on March 14, 1784): "Three such women are not to be found: I know not where I could find a fourth, except Mrs. Lennox, who is superior to them all" (qtd. in Ann Thompson and Sasha Roberts, eds., *Women Reading Shakespeare 1660-1900: An Anthology of Criticism* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 15). Johnson was Lennox's friend and mentor for over thirty years, so it should come as no surprise that he encouraged her to embark on the scholarly study of Shakespeare almost ten years before his own edition came out. Many scholars believe that what was originally a research task undertaken by Mrs. Lennox in preparation for aiding Johnson, ultimately became its own publication.

15. Charlotte Lennox, *Shakespear Illustrated: Or The Novels and Histories On which the Plays of Shakespear Are Founded, Collected, Translated from the Original Authors with Critical Remarks* Printed for A. Millar (New York: AMS Press, 1973), viii.

16. Lennox, x.

17. M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953).

18. Lennox, viii-ix.

19. Lennox, viii-ix.

20. Lennox, 1.

21. Lennox, 24.

22. Lennox, 24.

23. Lennox, 25.

24. Lennox, 31.

25. Lennox, 32.

26. Lennox, 34.

27. Lennox, 35-37.

28. Lennox, 27.

29. Lennox, 26.

30. Thompson and Roberts, 7. Such reasoning obviously applies to the Shakespeare Ladies Club (formed in 1736 and aimed at reinstating the Bard's plays in the London theatrical repertory) as well as the formidable minds of Elizabeth Montagu (author of *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespear, Compared with the Greek and French Dramatic Poets: With Some Remarks upon the Misrepresentations of Mons. De Voltaire* (1769) and Elizabeth Griffith (author of *The Morality of Shakespeare's Drama Illustrated* (1775) (both spoke with equal eloquence on the necessity of recognizing Shakespeare as a figure of national import). For additional information on eighteenth-century women's efforts to revive the Bard see Elizabeth Eger, "'Out rushed a female to protect the Bard': The Bluestocking Defense of Shakespeare," *Reconsidering the Bluestockings,* eds. Nichole Pohl and Betty A. Schellenberg (San Marino: Huntington Library, 2003), 127-153. Eger reminds us of the "striking reversal of roles" between female literary scholars and Shakespeare in the eighteenth century: "While many

contemporary critics have been concerned to add women's writing to an existing canon of literature by men, few have considered women's role in forming that canon at its first inception or acknowledged their active critical presence as a historical fact that must be relearned" (129). And, as a case in point, the Bluestocking defense of Shakespeare illustrates one of the best examples of a female recovery movement in history. Yet the same accolades that Eger pays to Elizabeth Montagu and Elizabeth Griffith in her essay are not extended to Lennox—making her largely forgotten, in many ways, by both female historians as well as more traditional ones.

31. The Shakespeare Ladies Club was formally established in the late 1730s and comprised "an informal association of 'Ladies of Quality' who in addition to supporting the Abbey project petitioned theatre management to revive more Shakespeare in place of both the libertine excesses of Restoration comedy and the irrational insipidity of Italian opera" (Dobson, *Making of the National Poet*, 147). The Ladies Club met such tremendous success that in 1755 Eliza Haywood had this too say of them: "Some ladies, indeed have shewn a truly public Spirit in rescuing the admirable, yet almost forgotten *Shakespear*, from being totally sunk in oblivion:—they have generously contributed to raise a monument to his memory, and frequently honored his works with their presence on the stage:—an action, which deserves the highest encomiums, and will be attended with an adequate reward; since, in preserving the fame of the dead bard, they add a brightness to their own, which will shine to late posterity" (qtd. in Eger, 127). However, as Eger points out, the women who participated in this revival were eventually eclipsed by their own constructions of Shakespeare and have ever since fallen into obscurity. In any case, Lennox's efforts are rarely associated with these women either literally or figuratively—in large part, I believe, because of the nature of her comments.

32. Margaret Anne Doody, "Shakespeare's Novels: Charlotte Lennox Illustrated," *Studies in the Novel* 19.3 (Fall 1987): 296-310.